



# HAMPSTEAD SCHOOL

Learning together Achieving together

6 January 2021

Dear Students, Parents/Carers

## RE January Examination Series: Year 11, 12 and 13

Following on from communication sent out yesterday regarding examinations in the coming days, this letter replaces all previous instructions regarding the current series of external examinations.

We are sorry for the late notice, but we have made the decision to **cancel all external examinations due to take place in the next few weeks.**

Last night we received guidance from the Department for Education stating that examinations should go ahead if we as a school 'judge it is right to do so'. This replaced the clear instruction given earlier in the day that examinations for BTEC and vocational qualifications would take place as normal.

After much discussion by senior staff, and after seeking further clarification this morning from examination boards, we decided that it is not right to hold examinations at this current time.

Whilst we are confident we could conduct the examinations safely in school, the high prevalence of COVID-19 at present means we cannot guarantee that journeys into school could be made safely.

In addition, we believe that sitting an examination in the current context would place undue stress on students.

The mental and physical health of students and staff must be paramount. On that basis we have cancelled the examination series and apologise for the inconvenience this causes in lost preparation time and any anxiety regarding your achievement in chosen courses.

**We have received assurances from all awarding bodies that students will not be disadvantaged as a result of the decision to cancel this examination series.**

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With regard to the announcements concerning the grading of courses for award this summer, we have no guidance yet on how GCSEs, A-Levels, vocational and technical courses will be assessed and awarded. We shall communicate any information and its implications as soon as we are able to. In the meantime, because of the uncertainty involved it is paramount students continue to work hard and do their best regarding their learning and any assessment opportunities they have.

They must engage with the online resources and provision through our remote curriculum because:

- Until we have a definitive set of instructions it is possible any work assessed may still influence the eventual awarding of grades or teacher assessment judgements
- You have an entitlement to complete the course of study you have chosen and/or been studying for
- The knowledge gained will still be useful and relevant in any future course of study undertaken – do not disadvantage your futures – and your courses are not yet complete and we will return to school as soon as we are allowed to do so to continue these course

We completely sympathise with all students who may feel disappointed with the cancellation of exams, or who feel worried about their future academic success. Please trust us to do the best for each student, holistically, in whatever method to determine grades is eventually decided.

Apologies again for the late nature of this decision. It is an unfortunate result of the context we find ourselves in and the lack of clarity from government. We also hope that the commitment to ensuring that it does not penalise you will reduce your own concerns regarding examinations at this time.

All Best wishes  
Matthew Sadler  
Head